



The Pacific Northwest During the Last Ice Age: 15,000 to 12,000 Years Ago

This map depicts the Pacific Northwest during the late Pleistocene Epoch based on available scientific evidence. Several interesting conditions relative to modern times are evident. The present city of Missoula, Montana was under Glacial Lake Missoula, the lake responsible for generating the floods that created the Aquifer sediments. Present day Spokane and Coeur d'Alene were also under water from Glacial Lake Columbia that was created when glacial ice blocked the Columbia River. The present location of Seattle, Washington was under a lobe of the glacial ice sheet. The vast amounts of water trapped in the ice sheet caused the Pacific Ocean level to drop about 300 feet, and the ocean shore retreated several miles from its present location. A full-size map developed by Jeff Silkwood, "Glacial Lake Missoula and the Channeled Scabland" is available from the United States Forest Service.